

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 160 617

TM 007 404

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 TITLE The Middle School Questionnaire.
 PUB DATE [78]
 NOTE 15p.
 EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Middle Schools;
 Questionnaires; *School Attitudes; *Teacher
 Attitudes; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Placement;
 Test Construction
 IDENTIFIERS *Middle School Teacher Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

The development and field study of the Middle School Teacher Questionnaire are described. The questionnaire has five parts, as follows: Professional Description Survey (seven items), Middle School Employment Survey (five items), Middle School Attitude Inventory (30 items), Middle School Concept List (20 items), and Professional Recommendations Survey (three items plus a free response option). The questionnaire was used to identify differences in attitudes and opinions between two groups of middle school teachers: 45 teachers certificated to teach at the middle school level, and 45 middle school teachers who had been certificated at either the elementary level or the secondary level. Differences were found in the responses of the two groups of teachers. These teachers certificated for middle school teaching had more positive attitudes toward the middle school program, expressed greater job satisfaction, and favored special preparation and certification of middle school teachers. Their concepts emphasized the characteristics of the ideal middle school, as opposed to the traditional junior high school. The questionnaire is appended. (CTM)

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THE MIDDLE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

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Development

The instruments which comprise the Middle School Teacher Questionnaire consist of a Professional Description Survey, Middle School Employment Survey, Professional Recommendations Survey, Middle School Concept List, and Middle School Attitude Inventory. The Professional Description Survey questions 1-7, yields data relating to school organization level of certification, educational status, professional preparation specific to the middle school, teaching experience, middle school organization, and student teaching experience. The Middle School Employment Survey questions 1-5, collects evaluative data relating to teaching expectations, job satisfaction, teaching assignment, and teacher preparation. The Professional Recommendations Survey, questions 1-3 and a free response question concern data relating to professional preparation and certification for the middle school teacher. These forms were developed through conferences with middle school teachers, administrators, and university educators as well as research and literature relating to the middle school. A draft form was administered to a select group of middle school teachers during the 1977-1978 school year in order to evaluate content clarity, uniformity of interpretation, and simplicity of

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response. The responses of this group were used to develop content and organization of the preliminary form of the questionnaire which will be submitted to five Northwestern State University College of Education representatives who made up the jury validating the questionnaire. Following the recommendations of the jury, the Professional Description Survey, Middle School Employment Survey, and Professional Recommendations Survey were revised and placed in final draft form. The Middle School Concept List consists of twenty concepts identified with intermediate grade education. Of these twenty concepts, ten are associated with the model middle school and ten with the traditional junior high school. Each respondent is asked to check ten concepts important to the middle school with the true middle school teachers expected to indicate those concepts associated with the model middle school. The Middle School Attitude Inventory is a Likert-type scale instrument consisting of thirty statements concerning the middle school to which the respondent is to react by labeling Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided or Uncertain, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. These thirty questions were developed from an initial list of 100 statements concerning the middle school drawn from the review of related literature. The original questions were individually reviewed with associates in middle school education for clarity, ease and uniformity of interpretation, and simplicity of choosing and indicating selected responses. Sixty statements were incorporated into a preliminary draft

which was administered to a select group of thirty certified middle school teachers at the beginning of the 1977-1978 school year. Each member of the sample had completed a special pilot program for middle school teachers comparable to the programs of certification extension found in most states with middle school certification. The respondents were asked to identify the fifteen statements with which they could most strongly agree and the fifteen statements with which they most strongly disagreed. The Delphi technique was used to develop group consensus which was achieved on the third round of responses. This consensus resulted in the identification of thirty bipolar questions designed to measure the attitudes of teachers toward the middle school. Each response scored "right" has a value of plus one, and each response scored "wrong" has a value of minus one.

Field Study: In February of 1978 a study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the Middle School Teacher Questionnaire. The purpose of the study was to investigate and determine to what degree the Middle School Teacher Questionnaire identifies significant differences between certified middle school teachers and those persons teaching at the middle school level while certified at another level (elementary or secondary) in the areas of:

1. attitudes toward the middle school educational program,
2. educational concept emphasis in the middle school educational program, and

3. job satisfaction with the middle school educational program,
4. recommendations for teacher training programs and middle school certification.

Procedure: The population of this study included 45 certified middle school teachers and 45 middle school teachers certified at another level (elementary or secondary). The certified middle school teachers were Group I of the study sample and the other middle school teachers were Group II of the study sample.

The data yielded by the Middle School Attitude Inventory was statistically analyzed through the use of one-way analysis of variance to determine if the mean attitude scores differed significantly between Group I and Group II teachers. The data yielded by the Middle School Employment Survey, Professional Recommendations Survey, and Middle School Concept List was reported according to responses to each item by the Group I and Group II teachers. Chi-Square analysis was used to determine what significant difference exists between Group I and Group II teachers in the areas of job satisfaction, professional recommendations, and concept emphasis in the middle school.

Findings: Data collected from Group I teachers by the Professional Description Survey revealed the following: (1) 80% had earned advanced degrees beyond the Bachelor's level; (2) 33% held elementary certificates with 67% certified at the

secondary level; (3) all had received their middle school certification through a program of college credit and inservice training; (4) all had earned educational course credit which emphasized the middle school; (5) average years of total teaching experience was 7.3 and the average years of experience at the middle school level was 3.8; (6) all were teaching in a school organization of grades 6-8; and (7) 47% had student teaching experience at the middle school level.

Data collected from Group II teachers by the Professional Description Survey revealed the following: (1) 54% had earned advanced degrees beyond the Bachelor's level; (2) 20% held elementary certificates with 80% certified at the secondary level; (3) no member of the sample held middle school certification; (4) no member of the sample had earned educational course credit which emphasized the middle school; (5) average years of total teaching experience was 11.3 and the average years of experience at the middle school level was 1; (6) all were teaching in a school organization of grades 6-8; and (7) 27% had student teaching experience at the middle school level.

Statistical analysis of data collected by the Middle School Attitude Inventory revealed that the mean attitude scores of Group I teachers differed significantly from the mean attitude scores of Group II teachers ($F = 50.631$; $df = 27$; $P < .01$).

Statistical analysis of data collected by the Middle School Employment Survey revealed the following: (1) 53%

of the Group I teachers had planned to teach at the middle school grades upon graduation as compared with 13% of the Group II teachers ($\chi^2 = 5.4$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$); (2) 96% of the Group I teachers responded that they would not transfer to an elementary or secondary school if the opportunity arose while 53% of the Group II teachers reported that they would transfer ($\chi^2 = 10.909$; $df = 1$; $P < .001$); (3) 53% of the Group I teachers indicated that their teaching assignment to the middle school was based on first choice compared to 20% of the Group II teachers ($\chi^2 = 6.339$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$); (4) 67% of the Group II teachers felt that their undergraduate teacher education program adequately prepared them for the middle school while 40% of the Group I teachers agreed ($\chi^2 = 2.143$; $df = 1$; $P > .05$); (5) 87% of the Group I teachers responded that if they would enroll in a middle school education program if they entered the field today compared 53% of the Group II teachers ($\chi^2 = 4.190$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$); 96% of one Group I teachers reported that they would add a middle school option if they enrolled in an elementary or secondary program while 67% of the Group II teachers favored the option ($\chi^2 = 6.00$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$).

Statistical analysis of data collected by the Professional Recommendations Survey revealed the following:

(1) Group I teacher recommendations for areas of increased emphasis for middle school teacher education were 46% Pre-Adolescent Psychology, 40% Middle School Methods, 7% Middle

School Curriculum, and 7% Subject Matter Methods while Group II teachers recommendations were 54% Pre-Adolescent Psychology, 20% Subject Matter Methods, 7% Middle School Methods, 7% Middle School Curriculum, and 12% None ($\chi^2 = 12.714$; $df = 6$; $P < .05$); (2) All Group I teachers and 67% of the Group II teachers reported favoring increased emphasis on the courses in number 1 and student teaching at the middle school level before a middle school teaching assignment ($\chi^2 = 5.736$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$); (3) 96% of the Group I teachers and 53% of the Group II teachers replied that there should be a separate certification for the middle school based on the requirements in number 1 ($\chi^2 = 9.136$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$).

Statistical analysis of data collected by the Middle School Concept List revealed that the Group I teachers differed significantly from the Group II teachers on ten of the twenty concepts. The 6 concepts on which Group I teachers placed stronger emphasis were: (1) A child-centered program ($\chi^2 = 9.130$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$); (4) A self-pacing approach ($\chi^2 = 8.889$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$); (12) Student independence ($\chi^2 = 17.364$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$); (13) Student self-direction ($\chi^2 = 6.136$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$); (16) Variable group sizes ($\chi^2 = 7.032$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$); (20) Creative exploration ($\chi^2 = 4.615$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$). The 4 concepts on which Group II teachers placed stronger emphasis were: (2) A textbook approach ($\chi^2 = 4.615$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$);

- (3) A Subject-centered program ($\chi^2 = 6.000$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$);
(14) Teacher-made lesson plan ($\chi^2 = 16.133$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$);
(15) The six period day ($\chi^2 = 15.000$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$).

Conclusions: The Middle School Teacher Questionnaire

identified significant differences in the following areas:

1. The attitudes of certified middle school teachers toward the middle school program are significantly more positive than the attitudes of middle school teachers certified at other levels (elementary or secondary).

2. Concepts of the certified middle school teachers emphasized to a significant degree the characteristics of the ideal middle school while those of the other middle school teachers reflect some of the concepts of the traditional junior high school.

3. The certified middle school teachers expressed significantly greater job satisfaction with the middle school than the other middle school teachers.

4. Certified middle school teachers favored special middle school teacher preparation and certification to a more significant degree than the other middle school teachers.

Dear Middle School Teacher:

Your cooperation is requested in a very important endeavor concerning middle school certification which should prove of real benefit to all of us. Please refer to the questionnaire enclosed. You are encouraged to:

1. answer all questions.
2. seal completed questionnaire in envelope.
3. return envelope to principal or other member of staff designated to collect responses.

Your ideas and suggestions are most important to the total success of this effort and will be greatly appreciated.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE IN EACH ITEM BELOW:

PROFESSIONAL DESCRIPTION SURVEY

1. Current degree status: ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Specialist Degree ☐ Others (specify) _____
2. Undergraduate education program: ☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ Secondary
Major _____ Minor _____
3. Are you specifically certified to teach at the Middle School? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, please check the basis of certification.
Elementary/Secondary ☒ Undergraduate Middle School
extention based on: ☐ Program
☐ Teaching Experience
☐ College credit
☐ In-service training
☐ Other _____
4. Have you ever taken an education course which emphasized primarily the Middle School? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, please give the title and a brief description of the course(s) below:

5. How many years have you taught in a Middle School and other grade levels.
 number of years Middle School Teaching Experience
 number of years Junior High Teaching Experience
 number of years Elementary School Teaching Experience
 number of years High School Teaching Experience
6. What is the grade organization of the Middle School in which you teach. 5-8 5-9 6-8 6-9 7-8 7-9
 other
7. My student teaching was done at the: elementary level
 high school level middle school level.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

1. What grade level did you plan to teach after graduation from your teacher training program?
 2. Would you transfer to the elementary school or high school if the opportunity arose? Yes No
 3. Was your first assignment to the middle school based on:
 your first choice as a teaching assignment?
 a temporary position awaiting assignment at another level?
 the only available position?
 other (Explain)
 4. Do you feel your teacher training program adequately prepared you for the middle school grades? Yes No
 5. If you were to enter a teacher training program today, in what type of program would you enroll? Elementary
 Middle School Secondary
- Would you elect to add a middle school option to an elementary or secondary program if it required 9 to 15 hours above present requirements and some student teaching at the middle school level? Yes No

MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTITUDE INVENTORY

SA - Strongly Agree U - Undecided D - Disagree
A - Agree or Uncertain SD - Strongly Disagree

- ___ 1. The development of the middle school has given improved status to intermediate grade education.
- ___ 2. A competitive atmosphere in the academic program as well as co-curricular activities will best prepare the student for real life.
- ___ 3. The middle school teacher is responsible for the establishment of an effective learning environment and the student for learning.
- ___ 4. The middle school provides an environment which specializes in helping the student make a smooth transistion from childhood to adolescence.
- ___ 5. Flexible scheduling provides for efficient use of teacher time and permits more effective instructional planning.
- ___ 6. The middle school facilitates the reorganization of teacher education to provide 3 areas of specialized training (elementary, middle, and secondary).
- ___ 7. Present undergraduate education programs adequately prepare both elementary and secondary teachers for the middle school.
- ___ 8. In the middle school organization it is probably best that the lower grades (5 and 6) remain as self-contained classes.
- ___ 9. The effective teacher must be able to anticipate change and adjust to changing situation, and to help the student do the same.
- ___ 10. Since children in grades 6-9 are undergoing common experiences, little developmental difference is noted.
- ___ 11. The middle school program stresses academic exploration as opposed to subject centered concentration.
- ___ 12. The diagnosing and prescription for individual learning problems can best be accomplished through formal evaluation by the counselor or a testing team.

- ___13. The middle school allows the student to begin studying academically challenging subjects under a subject specialist at a younger age.
- ___14. The academic program of the middle school should emphasis how to learn through student exploration.
- ___15. The six period day should be introduced by grade 7 in order to prepare the students for the Carnegie Unit in high school.
- ___16. Individual reading skills can be best developed by a separate middle school course in reading and spelling.
- ___17. The nature of the middle school program requires that each teacher also function as a guidance counselor.
- ___18. The middle school should place emphasis on student self direction and learner independence through joint student teacher planning.
- ___19. The academic purpose of the middle school is to provide the student with a strong background for high school studies in the four basic academic disciplines.
- ___20. The teacher should help the student develop a learning sequence appropriate to his level based on formal and informal diagnosis of ability and achievement.
- ___21. The only difference between a middle school and a junior high school is the grade organization.
- ___22. Future education (education for change) should be confined to high school grades as most preadolescences have not developed the conceptual processes such education requires.
- ___23. Developmentally, children in grades 6-8 are probably more alike than children in grades 7-9.
- ___24. Since most elementary and secondary teacher training programs overlap at the middle school grades, there is little need for a special program at this level.
- ___25. The middle school facilitates the introduction in grades 5 and 6 of some specialization and team teaching in staff patterns.
- ___26. Content area reading instruction should be a primary responsibility of each middle school teacher.
- ___27. One of the most serious problems of the middle school program is the lack of teachers trained specifically for the middle school.

- ___ 28. The mastery of concepts and skills in the 4 basic academic disciplines should be the primary goal of the middle school program.
- ___ 29. Guidance and counseling in the middle school program should be practiced by and limited to those professionally prepared and certified in the field.
- ___ 30. The middle school program should strive to lessen competition in all phases of the student's life.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONCEPT LIST

Please check the 10 concepts which you feel would be the most important to a middle school program.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. A child-centered program | ___ 11. Standard classrooms |
| ___ 2. A textbook approach | ___ 12. Student independence |
| ___ 3. A self-pacing approach | ___ 13. Student self-direction |
| ___ 4. A subject-centered program | ___ 14. Teacher-made lesson plan |
| ___ 5. Learning a body of information | ___ 15. The six period day |
| ___ 6. One teacher for a class | ___ 16. Variable group sizes |
| ___ 7. Team teaching | ___ 17. Student planning in scheduling |
| ___ 8. Learning how to learn | ___ 18. Teacher control |
| ___ 9. Mastery of concepts and skills | ___ 19. Belief in oneself |
| ___ 10. Principal-made schedule | ___ 20. Creative exploration |

PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS SURVEY

1. Regarding the undergraduate preparation for the middle school teacher, on what would you recommend increased emphasis? (Rank in order of importance to you.)

- ___ Early Adolescent and Pre-Adolescent Psychology
- ___ Teaching Methods and Materials for the Middle School
- ___ Philosophy and History of the Middle School
- ___ Middle School Curriculum
- ___ Independent and Special Interest Study
- ___ Subject Matter Methods and Materials for the Middle School
- ___ Other _____
- ___ Other _____
- ___ Courses now available are quite satisfactory

2. Do you feel the prospective middle school teacher should complete a special undergraduate program, including courses such as those above, and student teaching at the middle school level before a middle school teaching assignment?
___Yes ___No
3. Do you feel that there should be a separate certification for the middle school based on the requirements described in question 1? ___Yes ___No

Free Response: Please take the time to make any suggestions you think should be considered in the improvement of teacher certification for the middle school.